



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Jacksonville District

NEWS RELEASE

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P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Contact: Amanda Ellison

Phone: 904-232-1576

Email: Amanda.D.Ellison@usace.army.mil

FAX: 904-232-2237

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corps responds to incident at Odyssey Middle School

Jacksonville, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District stressed today the importance of learning and following the “3Rs” of explosives safety. Yesterday, a worker at Odyssey Middle School uncovered a buried nose cup from a previously detonated incendiary device that contained white phosphorous residue. Once the worker disturbed and handled the nose cup, the white phosphorous fill became exposed to oxygen and the device began to burn and smoke. As a precaution, the worker was transported to a local hospital, treated and released.

“This unfortunate incident reinforces the importance of following the proper procedures when munitions or suspected munitions are encountered. The incendiary device’s nose cup, which was buried 18 inches below a concrete curb, was not accessible until the worker dug it up. At that point, the appropriate action was to **Recognize**—that it might be munitions, **Retreat**—leave it alone, **and Report**—call 911. This is particularly important in areas where munitions have been encountered.” said Mike Fulford, deputy district engineer.

The worker was a subcontractor working to restore portions of the athletic field that were excavated during munitions removal work during the last several months. The buried nose cup was not previously detected because it was located under a concrete curb and near metal rebar. Because of the discovery, the Corps’ contractor will return to the site this weekend to remove remaining concrete and rebar at the broad jump area to determine whether any other potential explosive hazards remain. Early



this morning, Corps officials were on site to ensure no white phosphorous residue that could pose an explosive hazard was left behind. The area where the nose cup was found is fenced off and guarded to ensure the safety of students and staff, which is the Corps' highest priority.

"The Corps never walks away from a site. We responded immediately when the incident occurred, and we are taking the necessary steps to reinforce our safety education program for our contractors and others," Fulford said.

Approximately 14 tons of metal debris and more than 125 munitions containing explosives have been rendered safe from the school site since work began in August of last year. Approximately 2,500 anomalies were investigated. The total estimated cost for all work on Odyssey Middle School grounds is about \$1 million.

A complete surface sweep of the school grounds and a geophysical survey to identify areas where metal objects were buried beneath the ground was completed in August prior to the school's opening for the 2007-08 academic year. This surface sweep confirmed that no munitions were present on the surface of the ground. Soil sampling, which was also conducted during this period, confirmed that munitions constituents were not present on the school grounds.

The remainder of the former Pinecastle Jeep Range site will be addressed with a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, beginning in 2008. As part of that effort, additional soil samples will be taken on the school grounds in areas where munitions removals took place to ensure that there are no residual chemical hazards.

Safety is always the Corps' top priority. Should anyone encounter or suspect they have encountered munitions, it is vitally important to follow the simple "3Rs" of explosives safety: **Recognize** the item may be dangerous; **Retreat** and do not touch it; **Report** its location to the local Sheriff's Office immediately.



On behalf of the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cleans up sites that were formerly used by the military. In 1943, the U.S. government leased 12,483 acres of land in Orlando (Orange County) as an off-post site of the Pinecastle Army Airfield, for use as a gunnery and demonstration range. The site was declared surplus property and all leases were terminated on Dec. 4, 1947.

For more information about the former Pinecastle Jeep Range, please visit our web site at www.saj.usace.army.mil and click on the Pinecastle Jeep Range link or contact the Corporate Communication Office at 904-232-1576.

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